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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/407,475

09/28/1999

WILLIAM J. MAYER

99AB133

2818

7590

01/12/2005

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, DANNY

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2836

DATE MAILED: 01/12/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 09/407,475	Applicant(s) MAYER ET AL.	
	Examiner Danny Nguyen	Art Unit 2836	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 November 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 2-18 and 22 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 19-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
     a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Arguments***

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 19, and 21 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tate et al (USPN 4,375,660) in view of Lycan (USPN 4,737,603).

Regarding claim 1, Tate discloses a ground isolation circuit (see fig. 1) comprises a control configuration (such as circuit 28 and 40) for selectively linking and delinking the voltage lines to and from the device, respectively (e.g. col. 2, lines 46-59); a controller (such as circuit 40) for controlling the control configuration. Tate does not disclose a grounding configuration as claimed. Lycan teaches a ground configuration (such as an isolation switches) for, when the voltage lines are delinked from the device short-circuiting the input nodes to ground (e.g. col.1 lines 45-50). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the ground configuration for connecting the power conductors to ground when the power supply lines are disconnected as taught by Lycan in order to protect the

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operators and electrical equipments from hazardous voltage condition (e.g. col. 1, lines 14-21).

Regarding claims 19, 20, Tate discloses a safety switching method to be used with a device (16) which is supplied voltage on voltage supply lines, the method for ensuring that the device has been electrically isolated when electrical isolation is selected, the method comprises the steps of determining when device isolation has been selected by way of an actuatable switch (30a, 30b) located at a first location (e.g. col. 2, lines 46-59). Tate does not disclose short-circuiting the power supply lines to ground as claimed. Lycan teaches an isolation switches for, when the voltage lines are disconnected from the device short-circuiting the input nodes to ground (e.g. col.1 lines 45-50). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the short-circuiting the power supply lines to ground when the power supply lines are disconnected as taught by Lycan in order to protect the operators and electrical equipments from hazardous voltage condition (e.g. col. 1, lines 14-21).

Regarding claim 21, Tate discloses a safety switching method to be used with a device (such as device 16) which is supplied voltage on voltage supply lines and also for use with a grounding conductor (22), the method for ensuring that the device has been electrically isolated when electrical isolation is selected, the method comprising the steps of determining when device isolation has been selected (col. 2, lines 51-53); providing at least one control signal (col. 2, lines 53-54) when it is determined that device isolation has been selected; and grounding the supply lines at least indirectly in

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response to the at least one control signal (col. 2, lines 56-58), wherein the method further includes the steps of monitoring the grounding conductor to ensure that the conductor remains grounded and, if the grounding conductor is ungrounded, indicating the ungrounded condition via an indicator (col. 1, lines 45-49, and col. 2, lines 46-68). Tate does not disclose grounding the power supply lines to ground as claimed. Lycan teaches an isolation switches for, when the voltage lines are disconnected from the device grounding the power supply lines to ground (e.g. col.1 lines 45-50). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the grounding the power supply lines to ground when the power supply lines are disconnected as taught by Lycan in order to protect the operators and electrical equipments from hazardous voltage condition (e.g. col. 1, lines 14-21).

***Allowable Subject Matter***

3. Claims 2-18, 22 are allowed.

***Conclusion***

4. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

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shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Danny Nguyen whose telephone number is (571)-272-2054. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon to Fri 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian Sircus can be reached on (571)-272-2058. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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1/3/2005

  
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